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# IN-SERVICE TRAINING FOR THE BEGINNING TEACHER

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## ABSTRACT

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### DESCRIPTORS

Teacher Education; *Inservice Teacher Education; *Beginning Teachers; *Educational Finance; Financial Support; Program Budgeting; Preservice Education; Teacher Programs.

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*Asterisk indicates major descriptor.

## INTRODUCTION

A wise investor reviews the company's prospectus before making a stock purchase and analyzes the data concerning the yield or outcome, as well as the risks involved. Have we in education made any attempt to analyze our most critical investment--the teacher? Do we assess all the data concerning the teacher's preparation up to the point of entry into the profession? Have we defined the expected outcomes at the end of a four-year professional teacher preparation program? Have we predicted the potential for the finished or semifinished product as the graduate prepares to enter the teaching profession? Does the beginning teacher present a risk? Do we want short-term growth or a long-term growth investment? These are questions of serious concern when we examine who pays the bill for training teachers.

Conant's two-year study of teacher certification policies, published in 1963, shows that 66 percent of the teachers then trained in the 16 most populous states were trained at the expense of the public.[1] The public, therefore, is a concerned investor, but it has failed to make a serious study of the preservice and continuing in-service preparation of the teacher as a critical factor in the education of the nation's children.

## PRESERVICE TEACHER EDUCATION

It is commonly assumed that the certified teacher, at the end of a four-year professional preparation program, is a finished product, marketable, and capable of semi-independent growth. This growth may indeed occur if the new teacher is sufficiently motivated to pursue an advanced program in education because of his or her personal need to improve and learn. However, most educators would agree that the neophytic teacher is not a finished product but is only at the readiness stage to begin teaching. The gap between the ideal situation as understood during training and the real situation in the schools has still to be bridged.

Conant analyzed a typical 120-hour teacher education program in 35 colleges and universities and found that between 39 and 90 hours were allotted to special methods and only 5-14 hours to student teaching. Courses which could be labeled "professional" made up 11-29 semester hours.[2] General education dominated the first two years of college, with the professional training occurring in the last semester of the four-year program. This pattern persists today in many institutions.

Can we prepare a competent professional in one year or one semester? Bush, in a study of beginning teachers, considers the quality of a program more important than its length.[3] Programs are now being called for and developed that attempt to provide a professional laboratory in the real world of schools, with "real" children. To meet the criterion of relevance, called for by Smith and others in *Teachers for the Real World*, changes are needed in both preservice and in-service programs.[4]

Support for relevance in teacher education is not intended to exclude the knowledge base. In 1946 the Commission on Teacher Education stated that a teacher needs the best possible general education in order to deal effectively with the important problems of personal and social existence, and it also recommended that general education should not ignore the special and vocational needs of students.[5] These ideas remain valid today and imply the need for an integration of the various types of courses to avoid a sharp dichotomy between general education and professional education.

Although large universities might find it difficult to integrate their general education and professional courses, there is a need for more communication and cooperation between college faculties in the liberal arts and education and the personnel in public schools in order to develop appropriate directions for teacher education.

*Teachers for the Real World* called for radical reform in teacher education--a challenge that has many implications. The proposed professional laboratories in the public schools entail a commitment by colleges, public school systems, and other agencies. These laboratories can provide the variety of experiences and the breadth and depth of training needed to produce a truly professional teacher. However, this change may take time. It is not easy to modify the curriculum in public schools or in colleges. Educators need to work to develop curricular groups in colleges, made up of both college faculty and public school personnel, to plan together the programs for teacher education.

Industry has for some time worked in cooperation with colleges and the community to provide on-the-job experiences. Until similar programs can be put into operation in teacher education, the first-year teacher faces a dilemma. Smith's proposal could help to link the ideal of teaching, exemplified in college theory, with the reality of the schools.[6] Educators must be responsive to this challenge and, by initiating an ongoing process of cooperative program development in teacher education, help to build an investment in producing experienced teachers.

## HELPING THE BEGINNING TEACHER

Although there have been many studies of the problems and needs of the beginning teacher, this information has not been adequately used in helping teachers to grow and to fulfill their potential. Rubin, in "A Study on Continuing Education,"[7] suggests that in-service training is probably more important than preservice preparation because in preservice training the teacher learns about teaching, while in the classroom he or she learns how to teach. Rubin also makes the points that teachers engaged in a common pursuit tend to reinforce one another, that a school can provide for the professional growth of its teachers as part of their regular work load, and that

teaching weaknesses can be diagnosed and corrective programs organized. We diagnose, prescribe, and program for the children in our schools; why can we not do the same for the beginning teacher?

This diagnosing, prescribing, and programming cannot be done by a principal whose management responsibilities are so diverse that he or she has little time for staff development. For many principals it is an accomplishement to record even one or two teacher evaluations during a school year. Even the department chairpersons in secondary schools cannot act as instructional change agents in an ongoing program for the beginning teacher. Douglas Hunt, director of the National Association of Secondary School Principals' teacher education program, has said that there are highly qualified classroom teachers who, if given the time and authority, could provide the support needed for the beginning teacher. He estimated that in 1968 the cost to a school system for operating a beginning teachers program was $2,000 per person per year for equipment and released time.[8] But if we project this amount to cover the long-range growth that may be developed in the teacher, the cost is not great. True, there are some risks involved, when we consider the probability that there will be teacher dropouts during the first years of teaching, but this risk may well be reduced if systematic training helps the bewildered teacher during his or her first and second years in the schools. A majority of the beginning teachers interviewed by the National Commission on Teacher Education and Professional Standards expressed a desire for in-service education programs.[9]

## SOME EXEMPLARY PROGRAMS

One of the implications for in-service education drawn from Westby-Gibson's review of the literature is, "Teachers should be helped to learn new roles as they change from being primarily dispensers of information to becoming catalysts in the learning process and coordinators of instructional materials."[10]

Beginning teachers have often complained that in-service programs have not met their needs. However, a number of exemplary programs have been initiated that respond to these needs by developing instructional assistance in methodology, orientation to the community, interpersonal skill development, freedom to try new approaches, help for the teacher to find himself, and support in building a sense of security.

For example, the Wilmette (Illinois) Public Schools recognized that expertise cannot be developed in the first year of teaching and therefore focused on the needs of the teacher through the years of pretenured experience. A total of $20,900 was spent in 1968-69 on in-service training for 160 pretenured staff members, including a beginning teacher project which provided resource personnel, released time for training, materials, consultation, and visitation.[11]

In 1966 a cooperative venture involving the Hawaii State Department of Education, the University of Hawaii, and school personnel was implemented as a pilot study of statewide on-the-job assistance to beginning teachers under contract to the department. The major objective of the program was to encourage the teachers' professional and personal growth. Supervisory services were provided for constructive support and assistance, with the supervisors receiving graduate training in supervisory skills.[12]

The Beginning Teacher Project in New York State utilized master teachers as team leaders, a concept similar to the helping teacher prototypes of twenty years ago. The team leaders received six weeks of summer training, covering interaction analysis in teaching. One of the key phrases of this program was "without fear," intended to encourage a sense of freedom to call upon others for help.[13]

## PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

These are only a few of the experimental projects that have been designed to enhance the teacher's effectiveness during the early years of his or her career. The intent in each case is to begin in-service training as soon as the teacher begins to teach. The readiness stage that is reached at the end of the preservice training marks the right time to use the substantive knowledge acquired in college, to build upon the instructional skills that have been theoretically derived, and to develop interpersonal skills in the real setting of the classroom. The right formula will depend upon what is expected from all the parties involved in the continuing education of the teacher. According to Rubin, finding the right formula can make a profound difference.[14]

As a program evolves, consideration should be given to several broad areas of concern. Research has shown that the paramount concerns of the beginning teacher focus more on his or her own sense of adequacy and ability to maintain interest and control in the classroom than on the needs and accomplishments of the pupils. These factors influenced a three-year study by the National Association of Secondary School Principals and its proposal for a system of gradual induction.[15] Induction began as soon as the teacher was hired, with help planned during the spring and summer before employment. Time was allocated for orientation to routine expectations in the classroom, and another phase dealt with classroom organization, management, and methodology. Finally, midway through the teaching year, the emphasis shifted from practical concerns to case studies, demonstrations, analysis, and the art and skill of relating to children. This plan is described as an extension of teacher training, with structure and direction provided on the job.

The following ideas drawn from experimental programs may help in planning the in-service training of beginning teachers:

1. Assess the needs of each beginner in relation to the skills acquired in college;
2. Identify areas of competence relating to the assessed needs;
3. Specify tasks in the area in which competence is to be achieved;
4. Design a systematic training program to build skills such as
   --Interpersonal relationships,
   --Self analysis,
   --Diagnosis of student needs,
   --Analysis of teaching methodology, and
   --Observation and evaluation;
5. Provide support systems for human, financial, and material needs;
6. Utilize the leadership of teachers who are masters of their profession;
7. Train the helping teachers;
8. Provide released time for seminars, demonstrations, analysis, etc. for both the beginning and helping teachers;
9. Limit the beginner's responsibilities; and
10. Work toward a two-year program that relates to the critical first two years of a neophytic teacher's career.

## CONCLUSION

Several hundred million dollars are available each year for the development of innovations in education.[16] The existence of such funds has implications for the further training of the beginning teacher. A generalized cost analysis shows that the teacher who is employed for 35 years may earn more than half a million dollars during his or her teaching career. If only one and one-half percent or $7,500 of that amount were set aside to invest in the professional development of the teacher, the potential benefit to the teacher, students, and public should be many times the cost of the initial investment. Because the first two or three years of teaching are the most critical, the impact of an investment of $4,000 during this period should result in a marked improvement of teaching skills. The balance of $3,500 could be used for in-service development during the remainder of the teacher's career.

Professional teacher preparation is the responsibility of many groups--the public, the school systems, the colleges, and the state agencies. If the best models for teacher education, linking preservice and in-service, are to be developed, the commitment of all these groups is needed. Their involvement is fundamental to the promotion of a high standard of excellence in the teaching profession. Should we settle for less?

## NOTES


1. James B. Conant, Education of American Teachers (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1963), p. 165.

2. Ibid., p. 153.

3. Robert N. Bush, "The Formative Years," in The Real World of the Beginning Teacher (Washington, D.C.: The National Education Association, National Commission on Teacher Education and Professional Standards, 1966), p. 6.

4. B. Othanel Smith and others, Teachers for the Real World (Washington, D.C.: American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 1969), pp. 1-20.

5. American Council on Education, Commission on Teacher Education, The Improvement of Teacher Education (Washington, D.C.: the Council, 1946), pp. 82-83.

6. Smith, pp. 41-109.

7. Louis J. Rubin, A Study on the Continuing Education of Teachers (Santa Barbara: University of California, Center for Coordinated Education, 1969), pp. 1-24.

8. Douglas W. Hunt, "Teacher Induction: An Opportunity and a Responsibility," NASSP [National Association of Secondary School Principals] Bulletin 52 (October 1968): 131

9. Bush, pp. 19-20.

10. Dorothy Westby-Gibson, Inservice Education--Perspectives for Educators (Berkeley, Calif.: Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development, 1967), p. 7.

11. Wilmette Public Schools, Program for Beginning Teachers, An Individualized Approach to Inservice Education (Wilmette, Ill.: the Schools, 1969).

12. Daniel S. Noda, "Beginning Teacher Development in Hawaii," NASSP [National Association of Secondary School Principals] Bulletin 52 (October 1968): 62-72.

13. "The Beginning Teacher Project in New York State," NASSP [National Association of Secondary School Principals] Bulletin 52 (October 1968): 44-48.

14. Rubin, p. 24.

15. Hunt, pp. 131-35.

16. Westby-Gibson, p. 3.

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This final report by the commission offers recommendations on improving teacher education.

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The author presents a historical view of teacher education in America from the 1800s through 1946.

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This is a book devoted to research on teaching that provides a comprehensive scholarly and critical analysis of the literature.

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The lectures given from 1960-1969 relate to the issues teacher educators faced during that decade.

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The director of NASSP's teacher induction project summarizes what the project has been able to demonstrate in its short lifetime.

Jersild, Arthur T. "Behold the Beginner." In The Real World of the Beginning Teacher. Washington, D.C.: National Education Association, National Commission on Teacher Education and Professional Standards, 1966.

The author attempts to describe the feelings and reactions of the beginning teacher, from his own vantage point as professor of education and psychology at Teachers College, Columbia University.

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This paper reviews literature on problems encountered by beginning teachers in the inner city and points out some steps that have been taken in preservice and in-service teacher education to alleviate these problems.

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This paper discusses local school development in preservice education and selected models of preservice education,

including several experimental programs, that stress local involvement. In addition, local school involvement in in-service education is discussed.

Rubin, Louis J. A Study on the Continuing Education of Teachers. Santa Barbara: University of California, Center for Coordinated Education, 1969. 31 pp. ED 036 487. MF & HC.

This report describes a project conducted by the Center for Coordinated Education, which attempted to train more than 500 in-service teachers to teach selected cognitive skills to some 15,000 students in grades 1 through 10.

Smith, B. Othanel, and others. Teachers for the Real World. Washington, D.C.: American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 1969. 188 pp. ED 027 267. MF & HC. Also available from the Association.

The author presents a broad outline for teacher education to deal with children of all races and backgrounds.

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Westby-Gibson, Dorothy. Inservice Education--Perspectives for Educators. Berkeley, Calif.: Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development, 1967. 82 pp. ED 015 161. MF & HC.

This review of current literature on in-service education covers 184 items. The sections which are relevant to this paper are pages 47-53 and the bibliography.

Wilmette Public Schools. Program for Beginning Teachers. An Individualized Approach to In-service Education. An Application for Continuation Grant. Part II, Narrative. Wilmette, Ill. the Schools, 1969. 32 pp. ED 036 458. MF & HC.

This application for continuing financial assistance describes the operation of an in-service program for beginning teachers.

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- **ENCLOSE CHECK OR MONEY ORDER**
- **MAIL TO:**
  EDRS
  P.O. Box 190
  Arlington, Virginia 22210
- **COMPLETE AND SIGN BELOW**

_____
Purchase Order No.

_____
Date

_____
Signature

_____
Title or Dept.